In the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-21.   (Previously Withdrawn.)

22.   (Presently Amended) A method practiced at a network interface unit (NIU) directly connected to at least one local area network (LAN), said NIU also being connected to a non-secure node of a second network, which second network is in packet communication with at least one access node of a secure virtual private network (VPN), the method comprising

receiving data packets from at least one device on said at least one LAN,

multiplexing said data packets into at least one packet data stream,

modifying said at least one packet data ~~streams~~ stream in a security server in said NIU in accordance with a secure communications protocol by encrypting packets in said at least one packet data ~~streams~~ stream and encapsulating resulting encrypted packets, and

providing network destination address information from a Domain Name System (DNS) ~~DNS~~ server for at least selected ones of said at least one packet data stream ~~streams~~.

23.   (Presently amended.) The method of claim 22 wherein said modifying said at least one packet data ~~streams~~ stream in a security server comprises modifying said at least one packet data stream ~~streams~~ in an Internet Protocol security (IPsec) server.

24.   (Presently amended.) The method of claim 23 further comprising

receiving at least one stream of data packets from said non-secure network,

filtering out packets in said at least one stream ~~streams~~ of received data packets that are not from said VPN network, said filtering being performed by a firewall in said security server, said filtering producing at least one filtered stream of received data packets,

modifying said packets in said at least one filtered stream of received data packets by decrypting said packets in said at least one filtered stream of received data packets

~~stream~~ and decapsulating resulting decrypted packets <u>to produce decapsulated decrypted packets</u>, said decrypting and decapsulating being performed by said security server,

demultiplexing ~~said~~ at least one stream of <u>decapsulated decrypted</u> received data packets to form at least one demultiplexed stream of <u>said received</u> data packets for delivery to said at least one LAN.

25.   (Original)   The method of claim 24 further comprising authenticating client devices on said at least one LAN, and

wherein packets from authenticated client devices on said at least one LAN that are received at said network interface device are processed as packets received from said VPN.